**Cutting of Surru Trees in Vasai**

2405. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item, appearing in Sagar, a Marathi Daily dated 15th October, 2002 about mass cutting of Surru trees along the Coastal area of Vasai, Maharashtra;

(b) if so, what action Government have taken against the people, who have deserted the Coastal area and affected the environment; and

(c) whether it is a fact that these trees have been sold to one shipping company?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Thane Social Forestry Division under Konkan Social Forestry Circle, Thane has been raising Surru plantations on the coastal areas in Vasai Tehsil of Thane district. These plantation are raised either on community land or on gram panchayat lands. After 3 years, the plantations are handed over to the concerned gram panchayat for further maintenance & protection. Inquiry with sarpanch of Arnala Village, where mixirnum extent of Surru plantations have been raised reveals that no incidence of mass cutting of Surru trees along the coastal areas in Arnala Village of Vasai Tehsil has taken place in the current year 2002. However, sporadic incidents of cutting of Surru trees by villagers for domestic use do take place.

**Endangered Hoolock Gibbon in Assam**

2406. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased ot state:

(a) whether it is a fact that upper Assam's rare Hoolock Gibbon are at the verge of extinction, because of poaching by the people across the border;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to protect the Hoolock Gibbon?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.